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**Testimony in Support of the
Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled
The Appropriations Committee Public Hearing—March 4, 2011**

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Pat Butler and I am from East Hampton. I am 49 years old, and was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis on June 26, 2005. I would like to take this time to thank Governor Malloy for continuing to include the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled in his proposed budget this year. This program has been invaluable to me, and I strongly encourage the Appropriations Committee to allow the CHCPD to remain in their budget.

Closely following my diagnosis with MS in 2005, I went through a particularly devastating divorce. Left with few options, I was forced to move into Senior Housing, in spite of the fact that I was still quite young. The CHCPD has been an absolute lifesaver. From 2006 until 2010, when I was accepted into the program, I was relying on disability to support me. I was not even aware of all the immensely beneficial services that would be provided to me once I was enrolled in the CHCPD. I still recall getting the phone call in January of 2010, informing me that I had been removed from the waiting list and was going to be enrolled in the program. To say that I was elated would be an understatement. Having been in the program for over a year now, I can attest to its life-changing abilities.

Through the CHCPD I have truly wonderful aides who are attentive and caring. People frequently take for granted basic daily tasks such as bathing and dressing. Without the assistance of my home health aides, I would not be able to do these things. Thanks to the program, I am visited by a nurse every two weeks. As a result of my MS, I have very limited dexterity in my fingers. The task of opening a medicine bottle is nearly impossible for me. My nurse leaves me a two-week supply of my pills, removing them from their bottles so that I can easily access and take them. This seemingly insignificant task has made my life substantially better. I simply cannot prepare meals for myself because of my multiple sclerosis. Receiving three meals a day through Meals on Wheels has been a lifesaver, and I mean that quite literally.

As an individual with MS who lives alone, I would like to stress to you the impact that Lifeline, which is provided to me through the CHCPD, has had on my life. On several occasions I have fallen from my bed and utilized the Lifeline alert system. Each time I have received an exceptionally fast response. Were it not for this system I cannot say with certainty that I would be here today.

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